

**South River Programmatic Restoration
Environmental Assessment
(EA # OR-105-04-03)**

South River Field Office, Roseburg District

Date Prepared: March 31, 2005

**Beals Creek Culvert Replacement
Decision Documentation**

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize replacement of a large stream-crossing culvert located on a BLM easement on private land in the SE¼SE¼, Section 21, T. 30 S. R. 4 W., W.M. where BLM Road No. 30-4-21.0 crosses over Beals Creek. Field Office hydrology and fisheries personnel, and District Office engineering staff have identified the culvert as a source of sediment and an impediment to upstream and downstream passage by juvenile fish, and other aquatic organisms.

A temporary bypass road will be constructed to provide access to Federal and private forest lands, and other properties located above the project site. The bypass road will be removed upon completion of the project.

Culvert design incorporates requirements of *the Oregon Road/Stream Crossing Restoration Guide* published by the Oregon Department of Forestry in 1999. Installation of the culvert will incorporate Best Management Practices from the *Roseburg District Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP, Appendix D, pp. 134-136). Among the project design features and controls to be implemented are:

- Required pressure washing or steam cleaning of all excavation and earth-moving equipment prior to mobilization into the project site, to minimize the risk of introducing soil from outside the project area that may be contaminated with noxious weed seed or root materials. Disturbed areas will be seeded and mulched or otherwise revegetated.
- Restriction of in-stream construction activities to the period between July 1 and September 15, during low summer stream flows.
- Diversion of any surface stream flow or pumping of water around the project site during construction activities and in-stream equipment operation minimized to the extent practicable.
- Prior to the commencement of work, absorbent booms will be installed downstream of the project site to contain any inadvertent spillage of petroleum products.
- End haul of any resulting waste material to an authorized upland disposal site.

The existing culvert will be replaced with an open-bottom concrete bridge sized to greater than bank-full width and designed to pass a 100-year flood event. Three structures (weirs) will be placed in-stream to provide grade control of the stream channel and create step pools. This will allow accumulation of streambed substrates (spawning gravels) and will reduce stream flow velocities that currently impede upstream and downstream passage by juvenile resident fish, anadromous fish and other aquatic fauna.

Rationale for the Decision:

This project was analyzed under Alternative 2, the “proposed action”, of the South River Programmatic Restoration EA. Its implementation will meet the objectives of reducing sediment and restoring fish passage. Alternative 1, the “no action” alternative, would not meet the identified objectives or need.

The culvert replacement will not result in any undue environmental degradation, and is consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives (ROD/RMP, pp. 20-21). Specifically, it will aid in maintenance and restoration of: in-stream flows; spatial and temporal connectivity in the watershed; natural sediment regime; and aquatic habitat. It is also consistent with the management objective “To preclude stream crossings from being a direct source of sediment to streams thus minimizing water quality degradation and provide unobstructed movement for aquatic fauna.” (ROD/RMP, p. 134)

Potential effects to fish and Essential Fish Habitat are associated with sediment. With application of the project design features described above and identified in the National Marine Fisheries Service *Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion for Programmatic Activities Affecting SONC Coho Salmon, OC Coho Salmon, and OC Steelhead* the effects will be localized and short term, and “not have an adverse effect” on Essential Fish Habitat. Replacement of the existing culvert will restore access to approximately one mile of aquatic habitat utilized by coho salmon, steelhead trout and cutthroat trout.

The project area is within the range, as identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, of Kincaid’s lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus* var. *kincaidii*), a Federally-threatened species. The easement was evaluated as potential habitat but based on regular mowing, high shading and probable treatment with herbicides by the private landowner, it was determined that the site was not suitable habitat.

The site does not contain nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for the Federally-threatened northern spotted owl, nor is it within ¼-mile of any owl activity center, so there would be “no effect” on owls with respect to disturbance or modification of suitable habitat.

Public Comment:

No issues were identified by any local or tribal governments, State agencies, or other Federal agencies. The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from May 5, 2004, through June 4, 2004. Comments were received from two organizations. These comments did not constitute new information or identify any issues not already considered and addressed in the Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration EA, the ROD/RMP, or the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*.

Monitoring:

Monitoring will be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (pp. 84, & 195-198), with emphasis on assessing the effects of the restoration activities on the following resources: Water and Soils; and Fish Habitat.

Protest Procedures:

As outlined in Title 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the Decision Notice in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon.

In Title 43 CFR 5003.3 subsection (b) it is stated that "Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision." This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail or facsimile protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the Roseburg District Office will be accepted.

William Haigh,
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date